

Homeland Security Highlights

A number of programs and measures are already in place to help ensure our state is safe. Those measures include:

Emergency Management Exercising – Since 2001, more than 300 all hazards exercises have been conducted at the local and state level with more than 5,000 people participating in them. Exercises focused on response and recovery to a variety of hazards including tornadoes, chemical spills, plane crashes and weapons of mass destruction. Some of the exercises include:

- Walworth County held an exercise involving a train accident that caused a chemical spill in May 2005
- Also in May, Ozaukee County held an exercise on a major gas leak
- Heartland Defense – full scale terrorism exercise in West Salem, August 2004
- Kewaunee Nuclear Power Plant Exercise – December 2004 – involving an accidental release of radioactive material.
- Green Bay held a full scale terrorism exercise involving the Coast Guard and area first responders in October 2004
- The Wisconsin National Guard continues to participate in local and state exercises as well as regional military exercises. In the past year, the Guard has participated in four major exercises and various tabletop exercises.

Emergency Management Training Courses – Also since 2001, more than 8,400 first responders have participated in more than 1,600 training courses offered by Wisconsin Emergency Management Courses include:

- Disaster Response and Recovery
- Emergency Operations Center
- Debris Management
- Response to Hazardous Material Spills
- Incident Command System
- Terrorism Preparedness
- Volunteer Management

Other resources we have in the event of a major disaster include:

- Wisconsin has additional capabilities to provide quick response which includes the Regional Response or Level A and County or Level B hazardous materials teams.
 - Wisconsin has 8 Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams.
 - The Level A teams respond to the most serious of spills and releases requiring the most highest level of skin and respiratory protective gear
 - Teams are located at LaCrosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Northeast area (Oshkosh/Appleton), Racine, Superior, Wausau, and Chippewa/Eau Claire area.
- Wisconsin has 38 County Hazardous Materials Teams
 - The teams respond to chemical incidents which require equipment and training that exceed the capabilities of smaller fire departments
 - They provide assistance to counties that do not have a Level B teams
- In addition, the Wisconsin National Guard has the Rapid Reaction Force and the Civil Support Team which could provide assistance to local authorities

- Wisconsin has a newly remodeled State Emergency Operations Center which has already been used with the August 18 tornadoes and Wisconsin's response to Hurricane Katrina.
- The new Regional Emergency All Climate Training (REACT) center at Volk Field, which will provide first responder training in a variety of hazardous materials.

Improving Interoperability

- We have provided more than \$5 million dollars in funds to specifically address the interoperability issues in the State of Wisconsin. This includes identify needs as well as purchase equipment.
- In addition, grants that were provided directly to local units of government have prioritized \$23 million for equipment to improve the ability to communicate at the local, county, and regional level.
- Towers, repeaters, and upgraded new portable and mobile radios with statewide shared frequencies have increased the ability to communicate.
- We are in the process of making final decisions on statewide policies and procedures as well as the type of connecting system that will allow current communicators to achieve interoperability.

Collaborating with Local, State, and Federal Agencies

- We continue to work with a variety of agencies on planning and exercising on emergency preparedness for a variety of potential events including bioterrorism, agroterrorism, and mass casualty.
- Under the direction of Department of Health and Family Services, public health agencies and hospitals continue to conduct exercises to identify gaps in responding to mass casualty incidents or mass public health risks.
- Wisconsin is one of the first states to establish a health professionals volunteer registry, which to date has registered almost 1,100 licensed health care professionals.

Preparing Our Citizens

- Under the leadership of Racine County Executive William McReynolds – Wisconsin has a State Citizen Corps Council which is providing guidance and leadership to citizen preparedness programs.
- New local Citizen Corps Councils are being formed across the state. Currently there are 11 programs and they are organizing trained volunteers into response teams.
- We are developing a new Community Emergency Response Team curriculum that will better provide citizens to be better able to assist first responders and provide for themselves and their neighbors in the event of a disaster.